

**For Immediate Release**

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**EQUATORIAL GUINEA INVESTING IN HEALTHCARE**

MALABO (September 16, 2010) -- *Voice of America* (VOANews.com) reports that Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Health, Francisco Pascual Obama Asue said the government is working closely with the World Health Organization and putting up health infrastructure as well as implementing a host of health programs geared towards improving the health of Equatorial Guineans.

The Minister of Health said "the first investment began in 1996, and since then the government started investing in hospitals and other health centers. In Bata on (the coast), a very modern hospital was built called La Paz and it actually has all the modern technologies and is staffed by Israeli doctors. There also are a number of health centers under construction," reported *Voice of America* (VOANews.com).

As reported by *Voice of America* (VOANews.com), Minister Obama Asue said the government has adopted the recent WHO resolutions as part of the administration's efforts to improve public health for its people. Equatorial Guinea recently hosted a WHO regional committee meeting in the capital, Malabo.

In addition, the Minister of Health was quoted saying, "the government has been working hard to improve public health for its citizens in projects such as a malaria program, reproductive program with the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), cholera and measles vaccination campaigns, social development fund, and new hospitals," according to *Voice of America* (VOANews.com) reports.

*Voice of America* (VOANews.com) reports the WHO resolutions adopted, included: (1) establishing an African Fund for Public Health Emergencies, (2) Addressing major determinants of health., (3) reducing harmful use of alcohol (which calls on member states to develop and strengthen national policies and international evidence to adopt and implement regulations and legislation to create public awareness about the damage from alcohol), (4) using cyber health in the African region, which requires member states to promote political commitment and awareness in this area, and (5) strengthening routine immunization activities for polio eradication in the African region.

Minister Obama Asue said the government has taken measures to curb the abuse of alcoholism among the youth, reports *Voice of America* (VOANews.com).

"The government has issued a law forbidding the consumption or sale of alcohol to minors that is those under the age of 18 years old. The government has put in place an increase in the tax in the importation of alcohol into the country. And the government is working with the World Health Organization to receive technical assistance to develop and design new policies on the abuse of alcohol and how to prevent it."

***About Equatorial Guinea***

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea (República de Guinea Ecuatorial) is the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa, and one of the smallest nations on the continent. In the late-1990s, American companies helped discover the country's oil and natural gas resources, which only within the last five years began contributing to the global energy supply. Equatorial Guinea is now working to serve as a pillar of stability and security in its region of West Central Africa. The country will host the 2011 Summit of the African Union. For more information, visit <http://www.guineaequatorialpress.com>.

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**EQUATORIAL GUINEA FOCUSES ON IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATION**  
*Ministry Puts New Measures in Place as 2010-2011 School Year Begins*

MALABO (September 16, 2010) – In the nation's effort to build a better society through improving the education of its people, Equatorial Guinea's (República de Guinea Ecuatorial) Minister of Education unveiled a new set of standards and requirements for educators for the coming year.

The Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Filiberto Ntutumu Nguema met with principals, teachers and education professionals from schools in Malabo to present the new work plan.

Minister Ntutumu Nguema was joined by Deputy Minister of Education, Secundino Nvono Avomo, Secretary General of the Ministry, Miguel Esono Masogo, and the Counselor to the President for Education, Ondo Esono Asangono Anselmo, gathered with the directors general of the Ministry of Education, district directors and inspectors, principals, teachers and other professionals in the education sector. The purpose of the meeting was to guide the education sector staff on the new system of work and requirements.

During the meeting, Minister Ntutumu Nguema stressed the importance of education in society. "Thinking about general education," one of the highlighted themes, focused on education as the main road to success and teaching as the best vocation one can have. Minister Ntutumu Nguema cited several factors that affect the quality of education, including: teachers and professors, educational infrastructure, educational tools and adequate school buildings.

The next theme cited, "Planning, educational management and legal tools to regulate the functioning of education" focused on new directives for the schools and encouraged the schools to focus on planning and programming. The application of new rules for the 2010-2011 school year were discussed during the meeting, including:

In order to maintain school safety and encourage learning:

- Let peace reign in all schools, including the directors, teachers and students and avoid any conflict
- Prohibit all sharp material such as scissors, razors, etc. and impose expulsion of one week for violation
- Fights between peers require a one month suspension

With regard to discipline:

- The director must remain in their assigned location daily
- Attendance and punctuality, both for the directors, teachers, and for the students, is required

- Any dispute between students and teachers can lead to expulsion

For a quality of education and training it is recommended:

- Conduct training seminars
- Teachers must present the agenda for their classes at the beginning of the course
- Objective assessment of students
- Cleanliness and order in schools
- All students must wear uniforms
- Prohibit all vices and unhealthy behaviors such as counterfeiting grades, sexual harassment, alcoholism, smoking, prostitution among students, etc

At the conclusion of the meeting, Minister Ntutumu Nguema addressed the topic of "School fees" and reminded those present that tuition is free in both the primary and high school levels. He also reminded those present that parents can voluntarily contribute to the Association of Parents and Students at a cost of 1000 francs CFAs for primary school and 2000 francs CFAS for high school.

Education is one of the priorities outlined in Equatorial Guinea's "Horizon 2020" development plan, which was set in motion by President Obiang to move the country toward a sustainable and emergent economy. The plan includes the construction of new schools and teacher training.

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